

SOCIAL ACTION NEWSLETTER

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THE WORLD-WIDE CHURCH BEGINS TO FIND ITS VOICE

What may well prove to be one of the most important gatherings of modern times, from the standpoint of American Christianity, will be that which will be held in the city of Philadelphia, Pa. on the 27th, 28th, and 29th of February. There will be convened under the call of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America and the Foreign Missions Conference a group of delegates representing the American churches and appointed by the highest judicatory power in each denomination to study the relevance for American Christianity of a document issued by an international conference of lay experts and ecumenical leaders convened in July 1939 at Geneva, Switzerland by the Provisional Committee of the World Council of Churches. It is expected that out of the Philadelphia meeting definite recommendations to the churches of America will be made as to the use of the document as a statement of convictions with reference to the churches and the existing international situation.

Among those who have been invited to represent the Disciples of Christ under appointment by President H. B. McCormick of the International Convention are: Dr. A. J. Culler, Miss Bertha F. Park, Cleveland, Warren Grafton, Edwin R. Errett, Cincinnati, Ohio, Myron T. Hopper, Lexington, A. C. Brooks, Frankfort, Kentucky, Eugene S. Briggs, Enid, Oklahoma, J. B. Hunter, Little Rock, Arkansas, F. W. Burnham, Richmond, Virginia, Harold Fey, New York, J. Edward Moseley, St. Louis, Missouri, Harold L. Lungar, Chicago, Illinois, Robert T. Beck, New Castle, Harlie Smith, George W. Buckner, Jr., Miss Rose Wright, Alexander Paul, James A. Crain, and Mrs. R. A. Doan, Indianapolis, Indiana, recently elected vice-president of The United Christian Missionary Society. An invitation has also been extended to Mr. Gaines M. Cook, Cleveland, Ohio, president of the State Secretaries' Association.

The Geneva document and the group from which it came deserves a word of explanation. A group of 35 men and women met for five days in mid-July under the auspices of the Provisional Committee of the World Council of Churches "to consider what action is open to churches and individual Christians with a view to checking the drift toward war and to leading us nearer to the establishment of an effective international order." The membership of the group was drawn from eleven countries, including nations at war or threatened by war, representing Europe, Eastern Asia and North America. For obvious reasons no complete list of the participants has been published, though the eleven American members have appended their names to the document as published in this country. Suffice it to say that the "Memorandum" which came out of the gathering has already been laid before high government officials who are responsible for international affairs and has been referred to the churches of the world under a covering letter signed by William Temple, Archbishop of York, chairman of the Provisional Committee of the World Council of Churches, by N. le Pasteur Marc Boegner, chairman of the Administration Committee, and the secretaries, Dr. W. A. Visser 't Hooft, Dr. William Paton and Dr. Henry Smith Leiper. Among those who participated in the conference were laymen who have been officially connected with the Paris Peace Conference, the Hague Court, the Reparations Commission, the Mandates Commission, the Lima Conference, foreign trade and tariff boards, government economics commissions, and the International Red Cross. Some were experts in international law. Some of those who participated were at war psychologically, some actually. They came out of countries in the midst of mobilization and some of them had already adjusted themselves to war conditions and had developed a moral justification for war in terms of righteous nations defeating demonic nations or of exploited nations rebelling against injustice. The fact that such a group was able to come to agreement and to give to the world a statement of convictions as to the task of the churches in war time is a tribute to the spiritual quality of the members of the group and the growing reality of the worldwide fellowship of the churches across national boundaries.

The document makes no claim to authority. It is not put forth as a report or a recommendation but as a "Memorandum" to the churches of the world. Whatever authority it possesses it has because of the validity of its conclusions and not from any sort of external or ecclesiastical authority. After establishing certain presuppositions the group goes on to discuss the causes of the present international disorder and suggest certain principles which ought to apply to the exercise of political power. The third section deals with some tasks of the churches and of individual Christians in a world at war and closes by pronouncing certain moral judgments. The declarations, while not as advanced as some would wish, mark a new era in the history of the church.

CREDIT UNION RENDERS VALUABLE SERVICE TO
MISSIONS BUILDING GROUP

Four and a half years ago the employees of boards having headquarters in Missions Building, impressed with the value of the cooperative credit union as an instrument thru which a group having common interests can share one another's burdens, organized the Missions Building Federal Credit Union, under charter from the Farm Credit Administration. The organization began with 75 members, each of whom subscribed for one or more shares at \$5. each, making an initial capital of approximately \$375. Some shares were paid for in cash immediately and others were paid in monthly installments. The purpose of the organization is to enable members to borrow for productive or emergency purposes at a low rate of interest and under terms of repayment suitable to the ability of the borrower. Provision is also made for members to use savings to purchase additional capital shares, though under the by-laws no person can own more than 40 shares or \$200 worth. Each member has equal voting power irrespective of number of shares held.

The need and utility of such an organization was quickly demonstrated. Among the one hundred or more persons eligible to membership, sickness, hospitalization, death, and emergency needs, are not unknown. Not everyone can go to the bank and secure a loan. Many studies have shown that wage earners and salaried workers in times of emergency go to loan sharks & pay usurious rates of interest. At the end of the first six months of operation the credit union increased its share capital to \$1102.25 and made loans to members amounting to \$1617.50, of which \$532.30 was repaid in full. At the end of the first calendar year of operation (Dec. 31, 1936) and 18 months after its organization, the share capital had increased to \$2838.65, and loans to members amounted to \$1954.45. The following year (1937) the share capital increased to \$4,033.59 and loans made amounted to \$3,484.66. At the end of 1938 share capital was \$4,944.10, and loans for the year amounted to \$4,275.65. The report for 1939 shows share capital of \$7,437.28 and loans of \$5,441.43. Total amount of loans since organization is \$36,238.31. Loans of \$50. plus the amount of the borrower's paid in shares, may be had without security other than signature of the borrower. For larger loans collateral is required or the signature of a co-signer.

Some of the purposes for which loans are made are: the payment of hospital and doctor's bills, funeral expenses, purchase of clothing, furniture, new automobiles, etc. Interest rates began at one per cent per month on the unpaid balances, but have now been reduced to one-half of one per cent per month on the unpaid balances. From the interest fund the modest expenses of the organization are paid and a small dividend on share capital. So far to date when earnings have warranted a higher dividend the rate of interest on money borrowed has been reduced instead of paying the higher dividend. Any employees whose headquarters are in Missions Building, any member of their immediate families, and any association of such employees are entitled to membership.

Many churches are now turning to the credit union as an experiment in sharing unforeseen emergencies among their members.

WORLD ALLIANCE PROTESTS SALES TO JAPAN

The World Alliance for International Friendship Through the Churches, at its annual meeting in New York on November 10, 1939 protested the sale of raw materials of munitions to Japan in the following resolution:

"The World Alliance reaffirms its former protest against the sale of scrap iron and other raw materials of munitions to Japan, materials which Japan manufactures into bombs and weapons not only for attacks upon Chinese armies, but for the destruction of unfortified Chinese towns and villages and the slaughter of their civilian inhabitants. Since the recently enacted Neutrality Law by Congress has not only left this traffic unhindered but has repealed the former embargo upon the sale of manufactured bombs, airships and weapons of all kinds, so that Japan is now in a better position than ever to secure military supplies from the United States, the World Alliance expressed the earnest hope that the approaching session of Congress will enact appropriate legislation to stop this shameful traffic which is enabling Japan to continue this ruthless aggression in China."

Official figures quoted by the World Alliance show that in 1937 Japan secured 54% of her imported war material from the United States. In 1938 her imports of war materials, raw and finished, were valued at \$300,000,000 and constituted 56% of her total war imports. From the United States she gets 90% of her scrap iron imports, 66% of her petroleum and petroleum products, 83% of her ferro-alloys, 91% of her copper, 46% of her lead, 65% of her automobiles and parts, 77% of her aircraft and parts. The United States also buys 85% of the Japanese silk production, an exchange which permits Japan to finance her American war purchases. This partnership, with all of its hideous consequences, has been pointed out since Japan first invaded China three years ago. Strenuous efforts have been made by peace groups and missionaries to stop this flow of war trade, but without success. A Gallup poll taken in August 1939 showed that 82% of those voting favored an embargo on war supplies to Japan. The expiration of the commercial treaty of 1911 on January 26 opened the way for such action. Senator Key Pittman, chairman of the powerful Senate Foreign Relations Committee has introduced a bill providing for such an embargo and six members of the House have introduced similar measures. An American Committee for Non-Participation in Japanese Aggression has been formed with headquarters at 8 West 40th Street, New York, under the honorary chairmanship of Hon. Henry L. Stimson, Secretary of State in the Hoover Cabinet, who attempted to invoke the Nine-Power treaty when Japan invaded Manchuria in 1931. Associated with him as honorary vice-chairmen are such well-known persons as William Allen White, Dr. Robert E. Speer, Jonathan W. Daniels, Henry I. Harriman, Miss Josephine Schain and Admiral H. E. Yarnell, who until a short time ago was commander of our naval forces in Asia and whose vigorous policy won him the respect of both the Chinese and the Japanese. The Committee holds that the first step toward stable conditions in the Far East is the cessation of exportation of American war materials to Japan. Without these materials aggression cannot continue and the way will be opened for reconstruction in both Japan and China.

When the Interstate Hosiery Company of Philadelphia was taken over by a bank late in 1939 its 500 employees were faced with the loss of their jobs. Organizing as a manufacturing co-operative they purchased the seven-story daylight factory building and its 122 knitting machines, employed the former superintendent and re-opened the mill. The \$125,000 cooperative concern has weekly orders for 8,000 pairs of women's full-fashioned hosiery. The officers of the concern are all members of the CIO hosiery workers' union.

When Nile Clark Kinnick, of the University of Iowa, was voted the No. 1 football player of 1939 and awarded the John Heisman Trophy & given a banquet by the Downtown Athletic Club of New York City, he ended his response to the presentation speech by saying, "I thank God I was born to the gridirons of the middle west and not to the Battlefields of Europe." Since the speech was impromptu and unrehearsed (he did not even use notes) his little speech, says the University of Iowa News Bulletin, made "even blase, idol-weary New Yorkers ... excited to the point of hero-worship." Kinnick was called "the All-American of All-Americans" because he was chosen on 14 all-american teams. His preference for the gridirons of the middle west over the battlefields of Europe is being widely taken as representative of American youth's attitude toward war.

One of the "must" books to which attention is called is "John Black's Body" (\$1. from the Vanguard Press, New York) by Ben Martin. The book has only 48 pages and 403 words and can be read in three minutes, but as the 'blurb' on the cover well says, "you will return to it again and again and never forget it." In a series of never-to-be-forgotten cartoons Martin tells the story of John Black, ordinary citizen, representing an investment of something over a million dollars, incited by politicians, college professors, clergymen, industrialists and generals to go out to offer his body as a sacrifice on futile battlefields and when an enemy shell has done its work politicians, college professors, clergymen, industrialists and generals erect a monument over the fragments of his body marked RIP, while other John Blacks start in to pay the bill. It is peace education with a bang!

Congressman Hamilton Fish of New York on January 10 introduced in Congress, House Joint Resolution 408 providing that no citizen of the United States and no alien residing in the United States may be drafted for foreign service in the armed forces outside of the Western Hemisphere or the territorial possessions of the United States until after the question has been referred to the people for a vote. The vote is to be taken within 30 days after being referred to the people by Congress. As indicated, this bill would permit a vote of the people only in case of war outside the Western Hemisphere or the territorial possessions of the United States.

Life magazine (Jan. 1, '40) published pictures of raid by government agents on illicit distillers in Georgia, declaring that 4,000 stills were seized in Georgia, Alabama, S. Carolina & Florida in 1939. Life estimates illicit liquor "at least" 35,000,000 gallons annually.

"Saint Andrew the Sailor," by Peter B. Kyne, the saintly but profane Andrew Furuseth, who for 35 years gave himself sacrificially for his seamen and their rights. This writer met Furuseth just once at a labor convention and was amazed at the strange combination of saintliness and profanity that characterized this remarkable man who refused to take more salary than members of his union received.*

"Health Under Hitler," by Dr. Martin Gumpert, The former head of the Berlin City Dispensary for Deformity Diseases paints a dismal picture of German health under Hitler, based upon statistics released by German government agencies.*

"Youth Examines the War Whoop," by A. Fleming MacLeish.*

"Prayer for Peace," by Anne Morrow Lindbergh, Readers Digest, January 1940. Women must work for a bigger and better peace than can be achieved through military victory.

"This is Not 1914," by Walter Millis, Life, November 6, 1939; also summarized in Readers Digest, January 1940.

"Democracy's New Mirror," by Robert R. Updegraff, Forum, January 1940; also condensed in Readers Digest, January 1940. Congress and the politicians take polls of public opinion seriously.

"Japan's 'Patriotic' Gangsters," Events, a Review of World Affairs, January 1939; condensed in Readers Digest, January 1940. Liberalism in Japan held in check by terrorists.

"The Prairie Senator," by Richard L. Neuberger, Survey Graphic, December 1939. The story of George W. Norris, who voted against the World War and lived to become the Grand Old Man of American politics.

*Readers Digest, December 1939.

KAGAWA ASKS CHINA'S FORGIVENESS

The 1940 Kagawa calendar carries a most remarkable communication, a copy of Kagawa's letter to the Christians of China asking forgiveness for Japan because of the aggressions of the Japanese army and navy against the Chinese.

"Dear Brothers and Sisters in China:

Though a million times I should ask pardon it would not be enough to cover the sins of Japan, which cause me intolerable shame. I ask you to forgive my nation. And there are an uncounted number of young souls in Japan who, like myself, are asking for pardon. I beg you to forgive me, especially, because we Christians were not strong enough to restrain the militarists. Forgive us, as we work and pray that the day will come when our two nations will be harmonious in the name of Christ.

Argentine and Chile after long years of conflict, erected on the top of the mountain range between the two countries, as a sign of their reconciliation, that great statue of the Savior, Christ, stretching out his arms, on the one side blessing Argentine, and on the other side blessing Chile. So may the Prince of Peace come in the Orient, and bless China on the one hand and Japan on the other."

DISCIPLES TO TAKE CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR
ENROLLMENT

The International Convention at Richmond last year directed the department of Social Education and Social Action to provide means whereby persons in our churches who are conscientiously opposed to war and to military service may be registered as such on the roll of their local church and in the office of the department. In harmony with that action a duplicate card, has been prepared, one of which the petitioner is to sign and hand to his pastor, the other to be sent to the Social Education and Social Action Department, The United Christian Missionary Society, Missions Building, Indianapolis, Indiana.

The card is a simple statement declaring that the petitioner after mature consideration desires to be registered on the membership roll of his church as one who is a conscientious objector to all war on the ground that war is irreconcilable with the Christian religion which he professes. The card has space for name, address, name of church, occupation, age group to which the signer belongs, and other data. The procedure as planned will be for the signer to present the card to his pastor or church clerk, asking to have the card attached to the membership roll of the church which bears his name, or notation of his position made and the card filed among the records of the church. As indicated above, the duplicate card is to be sent to the department of Social Education and Social Action for filing with the national list.

In cooperation with the officers of the Disciples Peace Fellowship the department has designated Sunday, April 21 as Enrollment Sunday among the churches. While there is no intention of putting on a 'campaign' to secure signers, every effort will be made to make the fact that such an enrollment is in progress known to all the churches of the brotherhood in order that convinced conscientious objectors may have an opportunity to register their convictions. Prior to Enrollment Sunday a campaign will be carried on to bring to the attention of the churches the study course developed from the Richmond Peace Resolution as published in Front Rank and to be made available in pamphlet form for the use of local churches and study groups.

The purpose of the enrollment is three-fold. First, it will reveal the number of persons in the membership of the churches of the Disciples of Christ who wish to be registered as opposed to participation in war or in military service on the ground that it violates the Christian conscience. Second, while no provision has been made by the government for exemption of Christian pacifists from military service, it is expected that prior registration upon the membership roll of their local churches will establish a presumption in their favor in event conscription is decreed. Third, it will enable the church to know who its pacifist members are and where they are and to plan to give them such assistance as may be possible in event the outbreak of war results in suffering for their convictions.

It is strongly urged that every church precede the enrollment by a study of the Richmond resolution.

OHIO WOMEN ACTIVE ON SOCIAL ISSUES

Nearly 12,000 women in Ohio, members of missionary societies of churches of the Disciples of Christ, are receiving aggressive leadership in the study of social problems under the leadership of the Social Issues Committee of the state board of the Ohio Christian Women's Missionary Society, under the guidance of Mrs. Elmer Seigling, chairman and Miss Bertha Parks, state secretary. The program of social education, as outlined in a leaflet sent to all societies, calls for special meetings to be devoted to such problems as world peace, race relations, economic justice, and temperance, for the organization of special study groups to investigate and discuss these problems, for a church-wide emphasis upon social issues in various departments and organizations of the church, for providing leadership to other organizations within the church for such studies, and for cooperation with other churches and character-building agencies in particular projects in the social issues field. A chairman is provided for in each local church, who will emphasize those phases of living which look toward a more Christian social order, will encourage the use of educational material on social problems and help promote participation in projects based upon Christian principles. Helpful books in the field of social issues are recommended to local groups.

SEARLE BATES EXPOSES NARCOTIC TRADE IN CHINA

On December 21, 1939, China Information Service released a report by Searle Bates, Disciple missionary in Nanking, on the extent of the opium and heroin trade in the areas of the Chinese provinces of Kiangau, Anhwei and Chekiang under control of the Japanese army. Under the guise of an "Opium Suppression Bureau" public stores, smoking dens, hotels and other places are licensed to sell opium. Mr. Bates estimates that 3,000 ounces are sold daily in Nanking at about \$22. an ounce, making \$66,000. per day spent for opium in just this one city. He reports that the puppet government which the Japanese have set up receives a monthly income of \$3,000,000. from its \$3. tax on approximately 1,000,000 ounces sold in the three provinces named. Much of the product comes from Manchukuo and the cost price is approximately \$10. per ounce laid down in China. The wholesale price of \$19. represents approximately \$9. to cover the "tax" of \$3. The \$22. per ounce retail price represents an additional \$3. profit to the retailer.

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Department of Social Education & Social Action
222 Downey Avenue
Indianapolis, Indiana